

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9796

INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL GENOA

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMCONSUL PALERMO

AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH

AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

UNCLAS ROME 0590

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINS, SOCI, IT

SUBJ: POLITICAL VIOLENCE INCREASING IN ITALY

REF: ROME 20879

SUMMARY: THE TEMPO AND SERIOUSNESS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ITALY HAS BEEN INCREASING STEADILY DURING THE LAST MONTH. ON JANUARY 7 TWO NEO-FASCIST YOUTHS WERE SHOT AND KILLED BY A GROUP OF LEFT WING EXTREMISTS. NEWS OF THESE DEATHS SET OFF A SERIES OF BOMBINGS, MARCHES AND PROTESTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, DURING WHICH A THIRD NEO-FASCIST YOUTH WAS ACCIDENTLY SHOT AND KILLED BY THE ITALIAN POLICE. END SUMMARY.

1. ON DECEMBER 28, 1976 IN ROME A WELL KNOWN NEO-FASCIST ANGELO PISTOLESI WAS MURDERED ON THE STREET NEAR HIS HOME. AT LEAST 3 RADICAL LEFTIST GROUPS HAVE CLAIMED THE CREDIT FOR THE SHOOTING. ON JANUARY 7 TWO YOUNG NEO-FASCISTS WERE SHOT
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AND KILLED BY A GROUP OF LEFT WING EXTREMISTS AS THEY LEFT AN OFFICE OF RIGHT WING ITALIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT (MSI). NEWS OF THEIR DEATHS SET OFF A VIOLENT CHAIN OF REPRISAL SHOOTINGS AND BOMBINGS, AS WELL AS PROTEST MARCHES IN SEVERAL ITALIAN CITIES. DURING ONE OF THESE REPRISALS POLICE ACCIDENTLY SHOT AND KILLED A THIRD YOUNG RIGHT WING EXTREMIST. ON JANUARY 10 YOUNG NEO-FASCISTS CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN TO AVENGE THE THREE DEATHS

WENT ON A CAR SMASHING, FIRE BOMB THROWING MARCH IN ROME WHICH ENDED WITH THE POLICE ARRESTING 65 RIGHT WING YOUTHS AND CLOSING THE LOCAL MSI OFFICE. POLICE ALSO ARRESTED 3 LEFT WING STUDENTS IN A COUNTER DEMONSTRATION. IN TURIN, NAPLES AND A SCORE OF OTHER CITIES THERE WERE INCIDENTS INVOLVING RIGHT WING YOUTHS FIRING SHOTS AND THROWING FIRE BOMBS. BOTH SIDES HAVE VOWED NOT TO BE DETERRED IN ATTEMPTS TO AVENGE WHAT BOTH SIDES CONSIDER TO BE ATROCITIES AGAINST THEIR COMPANIONS.

3. THESE INCIDENTS HAVE CAUSED THE COMMUNIST-BACKED MAYOR OF ROME, GIULIO ARGAN, TO CALL AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE TENSE SITUATION AND INTERIOR MINISTER FRANCESCO COSSIGA (DC) TO HOLD AN EMERGENCY MEETING WITH NATIONAL AND CITY OF ROME POLICE OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS WAYS OF ENDING THE WAVE OF VIOLENCE.

4. ON ANOTHER FRONT THE NUCLEI ARMATI PROLETARI (NAP), A RADICAL LEFTIST GROUP, TOOK THE CREDIT FOR THE JANUARY 4 MURDER OF A FIAT SECURITY OFFICER, CARMINE DE ROSA, AND THE WOUNDING OF ANOTHER FIAT EXECUTIVE. ON JANUARY 10 ANOTHER RADICAL LEFT GROUP, THE BRIGATE ROSSE (BR) CLAIMED THE CREDIT FOR THE SHOOTING IN TURIN OF EXECUTIVE GUSTAVO GHIROTTO WHO WAS HIT IN THE ARM AND LEGS WITH SIX BULLETS.

5. ONE MEASURE OF THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE SPIRAL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IS INCREASING IS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TERRORIST UNCLASSIFIED

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INCIDENTS IN ITALY. ACCORDING TO THE JANUARY 8 EDITION OF THE NEWSPAPER "IL TEMPO", THERE WERE 702 TERRORIST ACTS IN 1972, 1353 IN 1976 AND 2080 IN 1977. THEY REPORT THAT THERE WERE 9 KIDNAPPINGS IN 1972 AND 76 IN 1977.

6. ON JANUARY 5, 1978, ON THE OPENING OF THE 1978 JUDICIAL SEASON, IGNAZIO STRANIERO, THE GENERAL PROSECUTOR OF THE SUPREME COURT ("PROCURATORE GENERALE DELLA CORTE DI CASSAZIONE") DELIVERED IN ROME THE ANNUAL REPORT ON CRIME IN ITALY. THE PERIODS BEING COMPARED WERE JULY 1, 1975 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1976 AND JULY 1, 1976 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1977.

7. THE STATISTICS WHICH MOST IMPRESSED THE PUBLIC INCLUDE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CRIMES REPORTED, WHICH INCREASED BY 7.5 PER CENT FROM 1,945,200 TO 2,090,700. CRIMES IN WHICH THE CRIMINAL WAS NOT APPREHENDED INCREASED BY 13 PER CENT, FROM 1,479,420 TO 1,671,950. THESE FIGURES INDICATE THAT CRIMINALS HAVE OVER AN 80 PER CENT PROBABILITY OF REMAINING UNPUNISHED. PARTICULARLY LARGE INCREASES OCCURRED IN THE FIELDS OF WILLFUL MURDERS (FROM 1,591 TO 1,850), EXTORTIONS (2,583 TO 3,110), THEFTS (1,454,767 TO 1,574,945) AND ROBBERIES (9,406 TO 10,847).

8. COMMENT: THE CLIMATE IN ROME IS PRESENTLY SUCH THAT AN EXTREME LEFTIST GROUP AS THE AUTONOMIA OPERAIA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROME CAN OPENLY CLAIM THAT THE SHOOTING OF FASCISTS SUCH AS THE TWO ON JANUARY 7 IS "NOT A CRIME, EACH FASCIST CAUGHT SHOULD BE SLAUGHTERED." THE LEFT IS TRYING TO USE THIS INCREASE IN VIOLENCE AS ONE MORE IMPORTANT REASON WHY A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, THAT INCLUDES THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI), IS NOW NEEDED. THE PCI HAS USED THIS LINE IN THE PAST AND IS PUSHING IT AGAIN. THE HEADLINE OF THE JANUARY 11 EDITION OF "L'UNITA" READS "THE GRAVE STATE OF PUBLIC ORDER DEMANDS A NEW POLITICAL ORDER."HOLMES

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